VITHOUT A NAME

EDWARD BLACKMAN

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WITHOUT A NAME

And Other Poems

BY

EDWARD BLACKMAN

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WITHOUT A NAME,

AND OTHER POEMS.

WITHOUT A NAME.

WHO has not seen, at some exalted hour,
A youth approaching there the throne of fame;
But, e'er he reached it, stricken in his power,
And laid within his grave without a name,
While men of evil deeds, devoid of shame,
Still kept to Earth and tried to find no truth,
Nor wished a good and only sought to maim?
Ah, world, why then is this?—poor, blameless youth!
Has not God taken him to shield him from thy ruth?

You smiled to watch him from your humble
height,
Slow climbing up the rocky gorge of fate;
As toiling upward through the murky night,
Fair dawn beheld him fallen 'neath his weight.
Ah! then you moved to help him, but — too
late:
The word was spoken; we had lost a man —
Yes, that and more — a beacon at the Gate,
That would have signaled others as they ran,
And lit the road where walks a heaven-aspiring
clan.

So well it is that some one's friendly voice
Should sing of him, who ne'er had time to tell
The wondering world the pictures of his choice.
O muses kind! come, help me sing it well;
Pour in from every deep and wooded dell
Thy conscious strain; for nature had decreed
This anxious youth should cripple to his cell;
So more the worth, and more the crying need
To lift his virtues higher and praise each little
deed.

Yet, how can I, with this poor lisp of mine,
Whisper the thought to find a willing ear?
When that the hurrying dragon, o'er the line
Of kindliness, is crowding, through the year,
Soul after soul — I cannot make them hear.
This is the song of one forsaken youth:
Why should they care for this memorial tear?
Why should they pause beneath the dragon's tooth,
To listen to my dirge, where life 's a dirge in truth.

Still comes the thought that some one moving by
May, through a gain of time before this day,
Have this spare moment, and will not deny
The soothing voice, and sympathetic sway
Of listening kindly to what memories say.
Old memories and sad, unsung so long!
But I can only briefly sing and play
Those only which must rise up into song;
Those only that may touch and still will not prolong.

Into the vast beyond he seemed to gaze,
  Seeking a light of which he caught the gleam,
And yet so faint and clouded with such haze,
  It left a doubt along its misty beam,
  Glooming his life, yet filling it with dream;
Until the real became unreal; unreal
  The shroud of truth, that would soon seem
A life in resurrection, when the peal
Of high-rung rousing bells should waken it to zeal.

O world! in life there is so much to learn!
  O world! in death there is so much to lose!
What scarcity of wisdom can we earn —
  O God! with but so little time to use!
  And what a dangerous coffin we may choose!
There on a cliff I see the morning glow,
  And on the vapory verge an ended cruise —
From clouds an angel — Satan from below —
Out portals and the gulf they race, and neither
    know.

How dread the deep and dark uncertainty!
How peacefully sweet the faith in something
real!
So real because of perfect sympathy —
Because of perfect trust in what we feel
Is simple truth we never can conceal.
What wild regret, to heap a sinner's load
And follow on till sudden stars reveal
A lone, forsaken shepherd's wrecked abode,
Upon the crumbling steeps of purgatory's road.

So he would ponder o'er the creeds of life,
Seeking divine within their formal word;
Still were the doubts in demon numbers rife,
Crowding the bridge and through the darkness
heard,
Until confusion whispered, "All have erred."
With soaring mind, he 'd rise above it all,
And, looking down, behold great truths inferred
From those same doubts — and still the sacred
call
Comes from the peaks of truth, not where their
shadows fall.

He lifted up a pleading face to Him —
A single, lorn appealing of despair —
When hope of life was growing pale and dim,
As if he thought that death was hardly fair,
Then settled back upon his pillows there —
He gasped and sighed, and quivering, breathed no more.
Ah, tearless eyes, to see that vacant stare,
Where once a hope was shining at the door;
Where oft the noble tears came pouring o'er and o'er!

Bitterest tears! — when at some careless thought,
As life was slowly shifting toward the bar,
The "Might Have Beens" his sadness haply caught,
And spread them o'er the blue, so clear and far,
When climbing up, as some forgotten star,
A sorrow starts upon the deep blue plain,
And shadowing clouds come rolling in to mar
The lovely sight and prove it all in vain: —
Sad tears! regretful tears! that fall as scalding rain.

Strange thoughts! when, on some darkened eve,
The angry battle clouds did scud acrost,
We tried to make our shadowed minds believe
Some lingering hope remained — as though we 'd tossed
A ringing coin for life and death — and lost,
Yet turned the coin with trembling fingers up
To view its hidden side. Alas! the cost
Seemed darker than before; the last sweet sup
Of life had passed his lips and left an empty cup.

A sufferer at dawn of life, he laughed
E'en while a sting had pierced his tender frame;
Or lisped a baby prattle as he quaffed
From out a bitter flagon without name.
Doomed from his birth to right a sickly shame
That dropped beside some ancient road of wrong,
Where he, entangled in its coil of blame,
Must drag it to his weary doom along —
Along this time-cursed highway, walled with maniac song.

Full many a slip and many a treacherous fall
  Along this path would blind his soul with dark,
Wherein are shrieks; and wretched demons call
  From out the gloom; and ghostly Terrors bark;
  And underneath, the white skull, cold and stark,
Of some lost traveler, meets his tender palm;
  And fleshless fingers on the blackness mark
One hellish portent, smoothing into balm,
With dangerous promises of rest and definite calm.

But out of this would struggle to his East
  The first liquescent lights of glimmering morn,—
Far from the lapping shore where storm has ceased
  To break upon the crags of life forlorn —
  And leave his land to wave its leaves of corn.
Thus from the mire and ghostly habitude,
  He 'd lift his tired spirit, waste and worn;
Cast off the touch of chilling fingers rude,
And, rising, bid his heart to take a merrier mood.

I mind him, maimed, so often left behind
  In childish play, and hear his crying "Wait,"
Then I with others, trying to be kind,
  Would pause a little 'neath impatient fate,
But soon some onward shout — too late — too late —
Would waver in upon the boyish brain,
  And we would leave him, left without a mate; —
His urgent pleading cry and mental pain,
Forgotten in our joy as summer winter rain.

But when the joyous impulse ran its race,
  Some kinder heart would 'long his path return
To find him weeping silently — his face
Bedewed with hopeless tears, but such that spurn
  This one's forgetful, selfish made, concern,
Ah, years! slipped through the waiting noose of Time —
  Flashed golden through and on life's flowered Urn —
I think from out the nightly angel rhyme,
I see that pleading Wait and hear its chorus chime.

Kind visions helped him as he limped along,
Intent, perhaps, on some pure boyish theme.
Contented now, he 'd hum some simple song,
And conjure up his pretty toys in dream;
And, dreaming, glide upon a rippled stream,
Out through a happy land, where, strong of arm,
He 'd lightly touch the oar, and see the gleam
Of grace in fairy forms, and feel the charm
Of Naiad voices in their chorusing alarm.

The river Hope, with banks of evergreen,
Is lovelier still within the brain of youth;
Red roses by its lapping shore are seen,
And fairy dimpled beings and no ruth,
Among the higher leaves of conscious truth,
He pulls the Naiad boat with painless oar;
Peers through the crystal tide from cushioned booth
To find an underworld with open door,
So beautiful and rare, 't is no Plutonian shore.

Thus borne apart from cramped reality,
  Beyond the dangerous verge of troubled seas,
He would forget the world's partiality
  And win a share of life's immortal ease,
  In dreaming midst a fairyland of trees.
Then to, the silvered haze along the dale
  At early morn, would press the hidden keys
Into a silent song; the piping quail
At sunrise strike the beauteous chords that never fail.

So passed aloof those lorn prevenient days —
  Life's village school — where dawn of knowledge broke
Through morning mists, with ever-brightening rays
  That lit the mountain passes and awoke
  A million voices that arose and spoke
To him a hidden recitation kind,
  Filled to the last with wisdom to provoke
The highest thought from out his teeming mind
And flash its brightness forth to aid the stumbling blind.

And yet 't was not the deeds, but prophecy,
That gave so fair a promise; as the moon,
When, on across a sultry summer sky,
Now hid behind dark clouds, gives notice, soon
In silver fringe to bring a lovely noon.
So had that curtained lamp in flashes shone,
All sudden through a tattered rift, a boon
To soul-wrecked eloquence — apart — alone
Was hidden — as the blackened edge was fringing — gone.

Remembrance keen of one triumphant hour
Would serve to show a dazzling glimpse of all —
The Class Farewell. He rose in kingly power
And won applause of silence — great and small;
A wondering spirit whispered through the hall;
A wonder burst from out those weary days
Of silent suffering; crowded to the wall.
All rose to ponder; went their devious ways;
But not till overflowing hearts had left their praise.

God knows that many a lash was wet that night,
As flashed again the image of that boy,
Alone upon one shrunken limb of right,
To strive in pain to paint another's joy,
Whilst a low moan did constantly annoy. —
Our lives are letters, scribbled o'er with pain
And printed over this a laughter coy;
We read the laugh aloud; reserve the stain,
For better light of tears within our shadow lane.

Yet once again the mind oblivious wake
To echoes drawn from slumbering days of yore.
'T was then he made the conscious spirit shake.
The whitest thoughts that echo evermore
Awoke the deeds of patriotic lore.
How startled was the rustic mountaineer
And city guest at freedom polished o'er!
That long had lain within its wintry bier,
Unburnished and untouched — now washed with many a tear.

Alas! The while he touched our very hearts,
The gaunt hound, Sorrow, cringing at his side,
Would lap his hand in those triumphant parts,
To let him know his faithfulness, denied
By transient ripples in the flowing tide
Of praise and shout and clasp of friendly hands.
Be sure he bid the cur to crouch and hide;
But its fidelity forever stands
To howl and moan upon the ghostly seashore sands.

High was the spirit which did bear him on
To action greater than his strength withstood,
For he would conquer when his strength was gone;
His Would in life was stronger than his Should.
Bright were his fires that burned for earthly good,
And yet to him were torture and distress;
High were his passions in life's brotherhood,
And yet in him, consumed without redress
The joys and hopes and loves within his wilderness.

How painful, too, the sting of Cupid's arrow—
  How tipped with rank and poisonous despair!
And yet at first, how covered up this sorrow
  With new impassioned flowers, unaware
  Of needle thorns beneath the fancy fair.
He plucked them leaf by leaf,—each petaled bloom;
  No friendly breeze could waft a warning care,
Till every cup had poured its sweet perfume
And stinging pain revealed the wounding thorns of doom.

As round and round the lamp at eventide
  The wanton miller risks a burning grave,
And circles near and nearer, undefied;
  So did his reason circle as a slave
  Around his love without a hope to save.
Those smiles were smiles of pity, not of love—
  Despised compassion on a glittering glave
He reached a hand and found an empty glove,
And drooped, as do the wings of some lost weary dove.

He drooped—but roused again with closer clasp,
And better brace, that keeps us from the slip;
Set firm his soul and struggled in the grasp
Of strong remorse—that gladiator's grip
Stern effort conquered; had him on the hip,
And for a moment stood in high disdain;
Then gathering all his force beneath the whip
Of Godly resolution and the pain,
He flung his victim clear and turned to laugh again.

You who have felt the all-inspiring thrill
Throb to the heart, go rushing to the brow,
And crackle till the fire consumes the will:
Just here as you have learned another's vow
Has sealed a weary doom forever, now,
With quivering feature, totter to the gate,
And pass alone to your dark chamber; bow
Your dizzy head until the hour is late
To think of his deep woe—then rise to bear your fate.

Long closed and still are mortal wings in death.
While lifted out to fan the breath of God,
They wearied, drooped, and sank for want of breath
From flight so vain above a swampy sod.
Yet if beneath some high inspiring nod,
He sings, what gentle music flows to him!
All filled with magic strikes the tuning rod,
So grandly chorded with the Seraphim,
While I—ah me!—reach out with tears—too faint and dim.

Too faint and dim; for when the bounden tongue
Seeks to express that, which the heart would feel.
Vain arms that through the city's mists are flung,
Resemble this, when in a drunkard's reel,
So wildly reached, man totters to his heel;
Grasps at the ivy clinging to a wall,
But tears a tattered leaf. So, though we kneel
With every pleading muse, or call and call
Across the silent seas, we stumble to our fall.

Deep moved as thought within a higher sphere—
  Not understood—and that 's the life of all—
The far-off music wafted to us here
  We can but hold an earward hand to call
  But one sweet strain our own; we tiptoe tall
To peer above an image wall of tune:
  Beneath our feet the sod sinks, and we fall
Down to the foot, Despair, where fancies swoon,
Or sing a faint remembrance, dying to a croon.

Speak to the winds where phantom ships are sailing—
  Perhaps upon that gilded prow 's the face
That left before, with drooping wings a-trailing,
  Our farewell tramp beside this hallowed place.
  The snow was falling, flake by flake, apace;
The wind of March was blowing bleak and chill;
  The stealthy wheel had left a deepened trace,
While climbing up the ghost-encumbered hill—
A frost e'en at the grave, we left him to His will.

Lie on, base creed, with every beating breath,
  That with an ancient tongue of withering hate,
Would claim a death or torture after death
  For such as he, who bravely bore the weight
  Of burdens worse than torture to the Gate.
May sound the heart of such a slanderous tongue,
  And paint a cruel picture of his fate:
This only from the heavenly roof is rung;
Thus only, from their mouths I could have sadly
    sung:

O kindred soul within your throbbing city!—
  With wings that flutter upon a pool of hell—
Lift pleading eyes and send a shriek for pity;
  But you shall not receive it: on you dwell
  Eternal torture as the Records tell.
Fall back with puffing lips acurl in pain,
  And that loved brow ridged deeply, or aswell
With bursting vessel: falls the scalding rain:
And so renew your strength, and so renew your
    strain.

What!—this, I plead, and there a God of love?
Untrue; the folly buried in the shame
Will point a warning finger up above
And say: Unguided malice is to blame
For sending such a messenger of flame
On out among the stars to wander here.
A Godly voice of pity must proclaim:
No judge of man shall rule a throne of fear,
But reign with parent love and whisper word of cheer.

Yet this fair youth, though virtuous and clean,
Had never learned to tread the narrow trail,
Where old interpretations haply glean
A misty light, far up a shadowed vale,
Which keeps retreating as their spirits quail.
White ships aglow sailed o'er his shadowed main;
White truth of love had served his Holy Grail;
White stars of hope lit up his darkest plain;
But wrinkled creeds of old had printed not their stain.

Think you that God would crumple up his thought
And thrust it forth into a filthy phrase?
Soar higher, O you mortal, surely fraught
With puffed importance, blind with gloomy haze
Of hoarded superstition; lift your gaze
Toward the high-moving worlds and there to scan
The aged suns — the words of broader ways.
Come, people them with wonder, if you can,
To feel the sense of God and live a larger man.

And wander not so wanton o'er the range
And down some deep Yosemite: His sigh
Is broad, not moved to malice or revenge
Upon His suffering babes, because they cry
For love, and, not receiving, wander. I
With you and every one hold but the signs
In each, of some deep purpose, or a lie
Is resting in each word of nature's lines;
And all we see and hear is mocking our designs.

Stoop not unto the groveling dust to seek
  The truth in some weak chronicler of time—
The history of petty deeds and weak
  Vain slanders on a Worthiness sublime.
  Unchain the raging mind to every clime,
And let it wander with the elements—
  The atom and the world, and hear the rhyme
Of universal poetry's defense,
In rousing soldier song from out the battlements.

Move with the surge of seas, upon the shores,
  Beyond the myriad gaping gulfs of space.
Wing on your wandering flight to where the roars
  Of mightier winds than ever blanched the face
  Of vain and transient mortal, sweeps the place.
Where sea-wide rivers roll and glance
  Between the league-high foliage, and the grace
Of wondrous trees and beauteous plants;
Where live the inconceivable inhabitants.

Perceive the broad, deep possibilities,
  In thought and deed, of one all-powered mind.
Take hold of kinder, mightier sympathies,
  And leave this cramping prejudice behind.
  Come, follow not the halting and the blind,
Unto the verge—precipitous despair;
  Build you a noble mansion, where you find
A sweeping vista onward, and prepare
To help to work and win—we do not know nor care.

Too faint and dim. Now down the morning wall
  The golden line steps softly to the lawn,
And burns with hope the level sweep of all;
  Then dims, and toward the evening side steals on.
  There glows in paling blushes and is gone—
Gone into dusk and into night's alarm—
  The mournful whip-poor-will, whose note is drawn
As, unto life or unto death, a charm—
In dreams of dreams I fall, and clasp a dreamer's arm.

In dreams of dreams, and through it all it seems
The voice of him I praise will talk to me,
To-night or else to-morrow night, in dreams.
A voice speaks from the shadow: "You will see
Him pass this way—and singing merrily."
So in a trance, I peer out with delight,
In trust, and hope, and all sincerity,
Until the dawn is dropping with its light,
The bars of morning, and I wait another night.

Truth breathes upon the walls down there,
Far to the east, beside my bowered gate—
Truth in gold from out the evening air,
Read from above, by watchers on the wait,
And laid upon the even scale of fate.
Now floods the stilly air with spirit song;
The happy echoing stars resound, elate;
Athwart the moon I see the shadowed throng
With laughter pass and pass, and troll the troop
along.

I lean far o'er my castle window case,
And listen with a trembling ear intent,
For one white-draperied fancy stooped apace,
And whispered: "He is passing." On she went.
E'en as I scan the dome-walled firmament,
With every nerve astartle, flits a form
Aslant the golden disk. Up through a rent,
Torn through a rolling portent of a storm,
I see his spirit soar and lead the beauteous swarm.

How well I know that highway leads to heaven,
Though just beyond the rolling rifted cloud,
Was built a road, afoam with risen leaven,
And, close beside, a demon in his shroud,
Who swings aloft a sign, in letters loud,
With sulphurous meaning: "HO! THIS WAY
TO HELL!"
There for a moment pause the heavenly crowd,
To seek for footprints on the seething swell,
Then all with laughter pass, each singing: "All
is well."

Dream flies with morn. The wind goes rushing
by;
The gum tree tops and cottonwoods bend after;
A flock of bluebirds float their passage high,
Till all too fast, they follow on with laughter.
The broad Umbrella lets the straight winds waft
her,
Or writhes within a whirl's enfolding arm;
The old house cracks, with many a warping
rafter,
Reminding me with half a ghostly charm
Of times when other ears could hear the swift
alarm.

I close my door, as comes a stormy eve,
And seek the gaze within this picture-frame;
The world's unlit conditions seem to grieve
For light beyond our weakly human flame.
And in this blind beginning of the game,
We cry to one who played it to the end,
Although the bout was short and still and lame,
Withal to teach and help us to contend—
To drive our courage on to battle and defend.

And in these firm and grace-set features, I
  See strength and courage, as to brave a storm—
The stern head poised, as if to win or die,
And large bold eyes, yet flashing deep and warm
  With sympathies, if seen in honest form.
How meet it is that I should turn to these
  To ask one fearful question of the swarm
Of queries that I dare not try to please,
Though just to hear them echoed brought eternal
    ease.

An answer to that question, I have waited
  These years, to-night expectant of reply,
And as the gloom is gathering, sore belated,
  A sharp distress would ask the reason why.
  Hush!—in the wind I hear a stifled sigh—
As if to part a pathway in the dark—
  I write on fast—'t will surely not deny—
Alas! I am mistaken—and a spark
Of hope is smothered by a voice that bids me
    hark:

Come, lift your wearied eyelids from the page,
The lashes wet with a hopeless dash of tears:
The poet, prophet, saintly priest, or sage
May only ask a question of the years,
And never get an answer to their fears.
Peer through the gloom, out o'er the wharf of time—
Just hear the water lapping at the piers—
The roar! the roar! but nothing else sublime—
All 's black, so come away and let the waters rhyme.

VARIED LEAVES.

WAFTED hither by the breeze,
Where I sit beside the stream,
From the gnarled old autumn trees,
They are falling in a dream.

Some are floating in the air,
More ambitious than the rest:
Lifted higher, wavering there,
Slowly downward to their nest.

Some are floating on the stream,
Like a soul's unconscious glide,
'Neath the shadow and the gleam,
To the music of the tide.

Some are lying round in heaps
In the hollows of the vale,
As a deadened life that sleeps
After feeble efforts fail.

But across the stream I see,
  Caught upon some lilies white,
One lost leaf of vanity
  Basking in the fair sunlight.

It attracts the gaze, and holds
  Rapt attention from my eyes;
For it seems that it unfolds
  Half my own realities.

SHADOWS.

DOWN I sit this lonely evening
By the fireside here within,
With the fire that just is kindled
Creeping upward out and in:

And the firelight falling on me
Throws a flickering over all,
While the objects all around me
Cast their shadows on the wall.

Here I sit, before me, staring
At the pictures on the wall,
All my soul within comparing
With the shadows' rise and fall.

As they waver back and forward,
Up and down, and to and fro;
So the feelings now within me
Rise and fall and ebb and flow.

Like the sad, uncertain firelight
  Are the hopes I dare to own;
Like the shadows 'cross the pictures,
  'Cross these hopes are shadows thrown.

And I think, and muse, and ponder:
  Ponder long, at times despair:
Ponder o'er the world's ambitions
  And the fruit that 's hidden there.

Now I 'm borne by fancy's transport
  Up the mount of care and toil;
Leave behind the blackest shadow,
  Think no more of world's turmoil.

But those shadows, dark and gloomy
  As they are upon the wall,
Spread across my pleasant vision
  Like a black and dreaded pall:

For the fire has smoldered lower—
  Scarce a gleam the coals allow,
Covered o'er with smothered ashes:—
  Nearly all is shadow now.

There I see before me looming
Still that mount of fame's turmoil:
Shining heights above the darkness
Only reached by constant toil.

Though the fire may burn yet brighter,
Still the shadows ever fall;
Till the lamp above is lighted
They 'll keep flitting 'cross the wall.

REST-LAND.

HAVE you not longed for spectral lands of yore,
Flooded with mellow light, down by a sea,
With waves that never break tumultuously,
But lap with low laughter the quiet shore,
Where spirits pass who passed here years before,
Young and content, and echo restfully
The laughter of the rippling waves to me—
As music from another life passed o'er?

Have you not dreamed of hope to gather here
The choice of yours beside you from the strife—
Oblivious quite of malice, greed, and fear—
Unto a summer dawn of peaceful life,
To feel the pulse and hear the rhythmic flow
Of what we cannot see—we cannot know?

SNOWING AT NIGHT.

'TWAS in past years, but brought to memory yet—
Under the roof of home, we hear the rain
Soft pattering from the dark against the pane,
And know the world is dripping, dripping wet.
So close beneath the roof our couch is set,
No note within that musical refrain
But soothes the ear with lullabies of rain.
And calming sleep the years cannot forget,
Comes nestling down; but when we wake again,
We hear no sound of dripping from the eaves,
Save muffled drops that fall but now and then;
Yet mind a rustling, as of far-off leaves,
Or of night's curtain shifting, soft and light,
And know the snow is falling through the night.

GLIMPSES.

COME out and away from the city's breath,
My friend, before the night;
Come up into the hills with me
And watch the eagle's flight.
Mount, mount to the highest peak
And see him higher still;
And then look back on the crowded street
And think just what you will.

Now sit you down upon this stone
And feel the cool, proud winds,
As fresh as those to the tropic cheek
That blow through the tamarinds.
Peer, peer through the simmering heat
Far out o'er the scorching plain,
And feel again that towering heights
Are not at all in vain.

Now hie away to the woods with me:
We 'll follow this deep ravine
Till wild with a snort the startled buck
Goes lunging down the scene.
Crash, crash through the underbrush;—
Far down the vale is he;
The sun has slipped from the western hill
And you are alone with me.

. . . . . .

It had snowed all night,
And the bushes drooped;
And the great tall trees
With their shoulders stooped,
Like some old man
With his whiskers gray,
Awaiting his call
And the judgment day.

. . . . . .

I saw some birds 'neath the bushes sit
With their feathers fluffed as to weather it;
And one sweet bird on a post-crown sat,
And cheeped and cheeped on account of that.

TO THE CLASS OF '96.

SO rise and fall the billows of our lot: —
When flowers bloom and wither, and the frost
Of winter in the blazing sun of summer is forgot,
You, Class of '96, will then have tossed
Aside the rules of knowledge, and have lost
Their many pleasures, but a life step gained.
Then as the fleeting days of fate are crossed
By hope and doubt and fear — 't is thus ordained —
You 'll turn a backward thought on school days that have waned.

The tolling bell as 't marked the study hour,
And yet again, as 't told the time of play,
Became a joyous sound, as from its tower,
Unmuffled tones pealed out from day to day;
The martial lines, drawn up in strict array,
And soldier march became a hidden pride:
The beating drum that timed the steps so gay:
All these sweet charms to you will then have died;
Will seem the greater loss when they are so denied.

Not to forget those dear old books: we read
And honored them, and dived in darkness deep
To unknown depths, and raised as from the dead
Those priceless pearls, which, gathered, serve to keep
The memory fresh when we are laid to sleep.
Then, too, those smiles of various meanings true:
Of friendship, honor, yea, Cupid's doubtful peep
To seek a heart's mate e'er his bow he drew,
And yet, still yet, withheld to send his arrow through.

In that broad scope of recollection dear,
Perhaps some sad remembrance softly steals;
At mention of a heartfelt name, a tear
May speak to that kind heart that feels
Of time, when clear were heard those measured peals,
Another face, that 's now beneath the sod,
Beamed back the light the kindled soul reveals:
The name still clings with friends who onward plod;
The soul has flown above, and nobly works with God.

So rack the brain and sternly knit the brow;
Thread on, O friends, this labyrinthian way.
I would not grieve that some lost member now
Has taken from this field his aid away.
What power drives, we may not know to-day;
And yet to-morrow glows some wondrous lamp,
Relit from eons by this hand of clay,
Lighting the world, and, too, the onward tramp
Of universal armies, through the ages damp.

FANCIES.

OH! how swiftly pass those visions,—
Like some fleeting swarm of birds;
Pass those fancies and illusions,
Far too transient for our words.

Though we seek by struggling efforts,
So to catch some fairy strain,
We get nothing for that striving
But our hearts dashed full of pain.

Still they come, lit up with brightness:—
We shall trace them down alone—
Ah! but now their light has faded,
And these words are dead as stone.

Like some cold, white marble statue
Looking deathly on and on,
They are left as faint reminders
Of the something that is gone.

And the heart turns cold and shivers,
  Fearing: — wondering as time rolls,
If these dim, still, passing visions
  Are not transmigrating souls.

THE OLD YEAR.

THE wind blew cold —
The year was dying,
The year hoar and old
On his death-bed was lying.

His thin drawn cheek
Looked ghastly and white;
He scarcely could speak
On that deep, still night.

So deathly and chill,
As if broken-hearted,
He gasped with a will,
And his last breath departed.

But list to those sounds!
'T is the ringing of bells!
'T is the barking of hounds
And the tolling of knells!

The night's people shout;
  The whistles are blowing;
The churches cry out
  To the New Year bestowing

Their praise and their hopes
  For the joy he is bringing,
As onward he gropes
  Till in age he is clinging

To life, like the one
  Who gives his last breath
And all he has done
  To the new in his death. —

The old year is dead;
  The new one is born;
And all the great dread
  Has passed with the morn.

OLD MAN IMPULSE.

JUST around the bend from our house,
In a hut there by a roadside,
Dwells an old man, David Impulse.
Bent and feeble, gray and shaken,
Is this man of many follies;
Yet he toils in fearful struggle
'Gainst the wolf that 's near the doorstep:
Wields the axe and falls the timber;
Splits it well in slender stove-sticks;
Piles it high in tiers well corded;
Toils and groans, and waits for buyers.
Has no food as yet to live on —
Only that which neighbors give him,
Cooked upon a fire that 's builded
On the ground beneath the heavens.

Many stories he can tell you
Of his life, with all its follies.
Of his boyhood days so joyful;
Of his youth so wild and roving;

Of his travels and adventures;
Till so warming with his subject
He forgets the world around him;
He forgets he 's old and feeble;
Lives again his life of impulse;
Treads again the path of boyhood:
Tells that once alone he wandered
From a fond and loving mother;
From his dear home to the ocean;
Of his sailing and its wonder.
Then a tempest came, and shipwreck,
And upon a raft of splinters
Floated he with just five others.
Day by day they floated onward,
Till fierce hunger mastered manhood;
And the boy's flesh young and tender
Crossed the wild thoughts of the others.
When he heard their eager whispers,
Caught their tiger-looks of fierceness,
Would have plunged into the water,
But they caught and lashed him firmly
To the splintered raft to share him.
But just then the heavens thundered,
And the waves dashed high in anger,
Till from off the buoying timbers

Then each man was washed and swallowed
By the great-mouthed waves of ocean.
Then a great ship found the outcast,
Bruised and faint, and him attended,
Till at last with eager longing
He was homeward-bound to mother;
But he found she had been buried
In the old churchyard of silence.

To Peru his story takes you;
To the land where bold Pizarro
Found the country ruled by Incas;
Found it rich in gold and silver;
Found it, conquered took the Inca:
Ruled himself in pride and splendor,
Till his comrades, waxing jealous,
Slew him in his house of plunder.
Oh! this struggle, blindly, madly,
Just for gold, is sure to murder
All the soul and heart and body
Of each man that has no other
Hope and aim and trust in living.

Now, he tells you, in that valley
Are a people easy-going,

Who, not rich in beads nor wampum,
Live a life of sweet contentment;
For the cause of life within them
Grows upon the trees around them.
There in forests grows the orange
And sweet peaches and bananas,
And the bread-fruit grows in cluster.

Once he loved and wooed a maiden
In this happy, prosperous valley;
Wooed and won a beautiful maiden.
They were wed, and started westward
On the mule-backs of the mountains,
O'er the wild and rugged Andes;
Wound their way among the ledges,
In and out among the ledges,
Till a sound like thunder heard they
Rumbling downward from the passes.
Just across their trail it thundered:
Struck the mule the maid was riding:
Struck and carried them far downward
To a death so dread and ghastly
That he stood in sickening horror:
Stood and gasped and groaned in horror.
Then he searched with eager longing —

Searched in vain to find her lying
In some cavern. She had fallen
Far beyond the earthly finder,
Lost to all except her heaven
And the ministry of angels.
Long he wandered, bent with grieving:
But in time the wound grew over,
Buried deep beneath the striving
Of the world with all the others.

Then he wandered into Chili,
Down into the mines of silver,
Into mines of hoarded copper,
Where no light of day does enter;
Where they work from morn till nightfall
And from nightfall to the morning,
Hardly ceasing: only stopping
For their food and sleep so needful,
While the others take their places.
Thus they dig with pick and shovel
By the light of lamp or candle;—
Dig from out the earth's recesses,
For the use of all the nations.
Copper, silver, in abundance.
With what burdens some are loaded
For the ease of other shoulders!

These are ever, ever toiling
Without thought or dream of pleasure:
Toiling onward in the darkness,
Like so many moles of shadow;
Working brain out into muscle:
Working soul out into body,
Till there 's naught but clay to molder.

Once a slave had worked for freedom
In these mines of hoarded silver:
Worked for twenty years for freedom.
Till at last the days were numbered,
Till at last the day was numbered,
And he clambered up the ladders,
With a heart so full of throbbing
That it stopped short as the sunlight
Kindled up his hopeful features,
And he fell back in the darkness; —
Gained his freedom at the portals —
At the portals of the heavens,
By the ministry of angels.

Next he sails upon the high seas
With a crew of sturdy smugglers.
You the listener; he, the captain
Of this valiant band of rovers,

Tells a story of adventure;
Tells a story you must hearken:

With two ships of secret treasure
Boldly sailed these rough freebooters,
When, on looking far to westward,
Where the great red sun was setting,
There across its disk was flitting
One black vessel, then another—
Still one more—a threatening number.
Well he knew, this captain smuggler,
Of the portent in those vessels;
But a braver band of outlaws
Never sailed a stormy ocean
Than this rover and his comrades.
Wheeling then toward the westward,
Straight toward the coming warships,
Sailed the wild crew into battle.
Soon the booming of the cannon
Roared across the surging waters,
Till the echoes from the heavens
And the echoes from the ocean
Met and fought another battle,
Never stopped they for the slaughtered
Till they reached the belching warships;
Till they lashed the ships together.

Fought they then with sword and cutlass,
Hand to hand and man to man,
There they fought in desperation,
Thrusting, beating, cutting, stabbing,
Moaning, groaning, howling, cursing,
There upon the decks they struggled;
But the smugglers were the stronger;
Back the others slowly wavered,
Till, exhausted, they surrendered,
And the pirates were triumphant.
But the battle was not ended:
On the captured bleeding vessel,
Sent for safety, was a fortune —
Was a hoard — a million dollars.
Soon a rover found it, held it
High in air, and shouted madly.
Then a comrade, waxing jealous,
Drew his sword and thrusting killed him;
Then like tigers at a slaughter,
Like the beasts of Rome's arena,
Losing all their sense of honor,
Closed the comrades in a struggle:
For the smugglers and the captured
Mingling in this sordid mêlée.
Fought like wildcats on the mountain,
Fought and died to gain a fortune;

Fought and died till all had perished;
On the decks were dead and bleeding,
Save alone the smuggler captain.
There he stood in wondering horror,
Gasping, panting, at the masthead,
With the riches in his clutches.
Wet with blood, each bond was ruined.
Long he gazed upon the money,
Then around upon his comrades.
What is this to me? he shuddered;
For, my God! I cannot use it,
And the law would sure reprove it.
So he gazed and deeply pondered
On the havoc spread before him,
And to free a demon notion,
Tossed the burden on the ocean:
And the battle there was ended.

With the ending of the battle,
As he told it in excitement;
So the old man sank with faintness.
And I know not of the future
Of the vessels that were captured.
As these stories now are ending,
So the old man's life is blending
Into death, where it is wending,
Slowly, surely, onward flowing,
To another world is going.

THE MEMBERS OF THE YEAR.

THERE are pleasures in each member —
In each member of the year,
From the nebulous November
On to August brown and sere.

From those stark winds in December,
Blowing bleakly through the trees;
To those soft sighs in September,
Whispering peace among the leaves.

And the blown snows coming later,
Whirling downward through the air,
Stir the soul to action greater —
Full of strength and not despair.

So the February weather
Sings in through its wintry arch;
There 's a tone of music ever
In the romping winds of March.

True, we start at April thunder,
When the lightning hands perform
As though tearing hills asunder —
Grumbling with their load of storm.

Yet a few such startled hours
They are folded, all is still;
Lo! the happy springtime flowers
Are out peeping on the hill.

And the May-time, blushing May-time!
All the poets sing of thee—
'T is the love-time and the play-time,
And the world is glad and free.

Then the summer, with its tickets
For the concert nights of June,
With the whip-poor-wills and crickets
And the katydids in tune.

As in this, so in its follows,
Through the harvest, gone too soon,
They are singing in the hollows,
Just beneath the mystic moon.

KISSED HIS FROWN AWAY.

A LITTLE boy and little maid
Were on the beach at play,
He wore a frown, for a dashing wave
Played havoc with its spray;
But the little maiden tiptoed up
And kissed his frown away.

The years passed on, as years will do,
When Cupid came their way;
But a quarrel rose, as quarrels will—
His brow was ashen gray,
When loving hands drew down his face
And kissed his frown away.

So on they went through ripening years
Till auburn locks were gray,
When trouble came—a growing debt—
Without a cent to pay.
But she was there, with her gray hair,
To kiss his frown away.

Then came the time in withered age,
His life was but delay;
His frame was racked with cruel pain,
While all the world was gay;
But she stooped o'er with hidden tears
And kissed his frown away.

And when they meet on lawns of ease
Upon some hallowed day,
If frowns there are beyond this life,
With him they 'd never stay;
With heavenly grace she 'd lift her face
And kiss his frown away.

TO-NIGHT.

YOU would speak to me to-night
In a confidential tone:
You would tell me of a fight
In your bosom all alone.

You would tell me of a fear
That was long since realized, —
Something said to bring a tear
That was formally despised.

You would speak to me to-night
While the clock is striking eight?
You should speak to me to-night:
Pretty soon will be too late.

Pretty soon, and comes the hour
Deepened slumber shadows me;
Pretty soon, and human power
Could not listen sensibly.

You would speak to me to-night
While the shadows gather round?
Speak of some long-cherished right
That would add to love profound?

Just a word, — I know it 's small;
But relief to burdened hearts —
Little tones that gently fall
With a thousand loving arts.

You would speak to me to-night
Of anticipated fear?
It might bring to you a light
And relieve me of a tear.

Just a word that soothingly
Brings some penitent delight.
Do not keep it; for I see
You would speak to me to-night.

BLOTTED PAGES.

DARKLY o'er these varied leaves
That I 'm turning one by one,
Fall the shadows of the trees,
Playing fortune with the sun.

As a faint reluctant breeze
Sways the branches to and fro,
On the pages through these trees
Spots of sunshine come and go.

Then anon some happy thought,
Now revealed within the light,
Fades, beneath the shadow caught,
As a traveler in the night.

Fades and leaves the anxious heart
In an agony of pain:
While the tears of hopeless art
Fall as silently as rain.

Ah! this serious book of life,
With its calendar of years,
Is a volume full of strife
Sadly blotted with our tears.

When we turn its last lorn pages,
With a trembling hand to save:
Though we 're numbered 'mong the sages,
We are tottering o'er the grave.

Still forgive; there is some spark
For a sad soul sure to be;
Like a lighthouse in the dark
For the lost ship on the sea.

These are teardrops — that is all —
Some of joy and some of pain —
That on every page must fall —
Fall as silently as rain.

TOYS.

I READ, reread, and read again,
Till filled with varied lore
I tossed each book quite rudely down —
My thoughts dashed on before;
I read of Burns and angel songs,
Of goblins in dark lanes;
Of nightly meetings of young hearts
Upon the tumbling plains.

I read of lovers at the gate,
Whose souls hung on a sigh,
Or yet of nearer parting kisses
Beneath a silver sky;
I read of kings and queens, and all —
The brilliant pageant comes —
And then I turned to other kings —
The heroes of the slums.

Till in a labyrinth of thought
I tossed them all aside,
And wondered if I lived to die
Or lived on when I died:
I wondered if the world was made
To cut a caper on,
And whether we are playthings
Of others that are gone.

THE CROWD.

FAR with a glimmering,
Silently simmering,
Comes a faint light.
Spreading out, flashing in,
Morning comes dashing in
After the night.

Rising from slumber then,
Worldly encumbered men
Pass to their work:
Onward so busily,
Often so dizzily —
Daring not shirk.

These so unfortunate;
Those so importunate;
Silently move:
Some so unsteadily;
Rising yet readily
Recklessness prove.

Other men fortunate —
Meanly extortionate,
Loudly exclaim.
Smiling so fraudfully,
Living not laudably,
Speak the proud name.

Some in their humbleness,
Silent and mumbleless,
Striving along:
Each in his narrow plain —
Living not all in vain —
Sings a sad song.

Hopeless, unspirited,
Sadness unmerited,
Clouding their lot.
Spurned for their unbelief;
God pities their grief —
He notices not.

Some seek the heights of fame —
Hunting for mountain game
On to the end:
Striving on fatefully,
Living ungratefully —
Try to ascend.

Seeming superior;
Really inferior—
Stealing their way:
Thoughts so abhorable;
Hearts so deplorable,
Holding their sway.

Mocking divinity,
E'en to infinity,—
Heavenly dressed:
Praying so mournfully;
Sadly and lornfully—
Outwardly blessed.

But should we look again
Into the souls of men,
Seeking divine.
Changed then the scene would be—
Heartlessness we should see
Dressing so fine.

Then to the gutter go,
Pull back the shutter low—
What do you see?
Sights that would shock the soul
Now on the vista roll—
Mad as the sea.

Pitiful sanity!
Blackest profanity! —
Mournfully lost!
Fooled by a worldly kiss,
Hiding the serpent's hiss, —
Led to the cost.

Thus have the spirits passed
O'er the mind world aghast,
Varied as leaves
Sighing in forest trees,
Swayed by the summer breeze —
God-given leaves.

Mistily, dreamily,
Mystical seemingly
Vanish in shrouds:
Vanish and come again
Millions of different men —
Veiled up in clouds.

Wonderful world of dreams!
God! O, how strange it seems! —
Life on a star,
While all around about
Wheeling their circuit route
Millions afar!

Gemming the sky at night,
Lighting the angels' flight
'Mong all the worlds.
Each with its spirits rife,
Earth-like perhaps in life,
Strivingly whirls.

Think of it wonderingly,
Not of it blunderingly —
Space-wide and deep;
Then as the glimmering
Dies faintly simmering,
Lie down to sleep.

THE LAST MEMBER.

THE ship has landed and they 've gone—
Gone out into the world
With the first faint streaks of dawn
And their flags of hope unfurled.

Gone on down the streets of time
Like some morning walkers grim;
Gone on with their hopes sublime—
Hopes that must and will grow dim.

And while their footsteps linger still,
With a solemn echoed tone,
Each upon his separate will—
Let us cast one life alone.

Who can tell as with the years
Onward sweeps the tide of life,
If with joy or if with tears
He shall look back on the strife?

When adown some far lone isle
Of the great ancestral hall,
This last member for a while,
Gazing on the pictured wall,

There shall see some honored face—
His companion long ago—
With its features full of grace,
Looking smilingly below.

Then the recollections come
Of the school-days of their youth;
And he thinks in language dumd
'T was the fairy time of truth.

He remembers then of old
The old school-bell's joyous tone;
And the names that were enscrolled
Long ago upon the tomb.

Of that proudest day of all,
When eleven students stood
In the great and crowded hall
And were crowned for earthly good;

Of the later days that came,—
  They were crowned with other things:
Not with thorny wreaths of fame,
  But with honor wisdom brings.

Then he thinks of after years,
  When the raven locks turned gray;
And he breaks down into tears,—
  He must go as well as they.

THE SENIOR'S DREAM.

A SENIOR round him drew his robes of night
To soothe his little troubles of the day.
A moment's silent thinking, then a light
From dreamland, loomed the darkness far away;
And vanished real and came the vision play
Of fairies, on the vista of a dream.
Ah, such a dream! so soft, so still, so gay,
Stole on the panoramic pictures. 'T was a theme
Beyond a poet's pen, so mystic did it seem.

A dainty hand a sparkling curtain drew;
A pale, soft, silver light fell on the scene;
A thousand evergreens shone bright with dew,
That twinkled as a million stars; a sheen
Of golden light fell slowly in between,
So that one side was white, the other gold.
An avenue where twined a path was seen,
And at the farthest end a castle old,
Where, from its portals then, a hundred voices rolled.

And listening, the silvery voices sent
To him the sweet and phantom music. Then
Each wavering echo stealing onward went
Slow trailing down some deep and quiet glen
To distant sleeping silence, where and when
Each follow came, and dying, sank beside
Its phantom sister, speaking ne'er again.
Even as hopes these transient echoes glide,
That have forever risen, and as surely died.

Then by the unseen wings of rising hope,
Into the castle hall he 's swiftly borne,
Where every hoarded sorrow did elope,
And every happy pleasure did adorn,
And doubt was left a-sleeping, all forlorn.
The spacious hall in brilliant luster shone
In gold and white — a paradise of morn.
And still the subdued choruses unknown
Fill up the corridors with sweet angelic tone.

So, wandering long the pictured galleries
With fays and sylphs and fairies, that attend,
He nears a white-robed company, and sees
A marble throne, in which all colors blend;
And o'er it hung a curtain to defend,

But now drawn back, that to his eye revealed
The queen of fame, who bade him to ascend,
And while triumphant bells are pealed
He 's crowned a king of thought and wakened as
he kneeled.

DO NOT HIDE THY TEARS.

DO not hide thy heart-felt tears from me,
Sweet friend of mine—those tears that seem divine—
Speak them—shed them e'er the sea
Rolls in upon the sanded line,
Washing prints of love from off the sand
Of two hearts one; or welded into thine;
Or into mine, whilst wandering on the strand,
'Neath gleam of hope and doubt of fears,
Do not hide thy tears.

Drawn from eve the angel lights away—
Then swelling to our hearts from depths unknown—
Sweet depths where fairy lovers play
With Naiad ropes of feeling all alone—
They rise—the saddened melancholy tears—
And speak for thee to God in undertone;
And He would send another, sharing fears
With thee; and kindly says:—"It more endears,
Do not hide thy tears."

Thoughts that wake the very depths of me—
The feeling thoughts, and chase them to my lips
To lisp them in a childish song of thee,
Are pleading with humble lingual slips
To share thy pain and sorrow evermore.
And why wouldst thou, with finger tips
Just resting in my palm, deny what I implore,
Forgetting we are friends through all the years?
Do not hide thy tears.

And why wouldst thou, as sadly to express
In those far dreaming eyes of thine,
So innocent of guile, defending, not confess
Thy bleeding heart, and place thy hand in mine,
Saying bravely: I will try and from this hour
No hidden coil of weeping shall entwine
This throbbing heart— all trembling in its power.
These secret drops commingle with thy fears;
Do not hide thy tears.

As gliding happy waters go laughing to the sea
To clasp their mother ocean in embrace,
Yet rise again and mingle tears with thee
And her, and all, and all their lives retrace;
So shedding thine with mine, a crystal stream
Of happy tears goes gliding to another silent place,
The happier for company in dream;—
Goes singing into heaven; sacred tears, loving tears;
Do not hide thy tears.

IN DREAMLAND.

IN dreamland's fairy ship of state I rode;
Away through misty realms it took its way;
A world where mind is king its vista showed.
Where fancies with their own sweet visions play;
And as the gauzy sails so light and gay
Were spread before the happy breeze of thought,
All worldly thoughts of sorrow sped away;
Each pang dimmed, fainter grew, and died, or sought
The air and fled as small dark clouds the wind has caught.

'Midst softly flowing voices and sweet tune,
The ship has paused and I in dream explore
This paradise of dreamland that too soon
Will vanish in the mists for evermore.
O happy land! with fairy bordered shore,
And spreading grassy lawns and fountains clear,
Where naught but peace and pleasure do outpour,
O, would that all the world did thus appear!
And I with thee could dwell, not knowing worldly fear.

Oh! would that I, entranced as I am here,
Might rove at leisure 'cross thy shaded plain;
Might wander o'er thy level glades so dear,
And dwell within the castles of my brain.
Upon thy fairest dimpled lawn I 've lain,
Surrounded by the graceful evergreen;
All round about the perfumed fountains rain,
Where shooting high their purest crystal sheen,
The air with fragrance fill and show a beauteous scene.

Near-by my visionary castle stands —
A jeweled palace reared by fancy sweet.
There 's none so pure in all the earthly lands,
So grand! in structure, form, and size complete.
The massive pillars stand with molding neat,
Are set with precious diamonds here and there:
The steps are gold, the floors a silver sheet
And gemmed with pearls and other jewels rare,
While upward flights there show like heaven's golden stair.

Sweet Cupid fays play round me o'er the green,
Or flutter in and out the palace ways,
Or trip fantastic figures down between
The long-drawn shades to please me in their plays.
But fairest, best of all, upon my gaze:
My vision ideal of face and form and soul
Floats through the perfumed air to me and stays
To lave my dreamland hour with floods that roll
O'er each and every pain that seemed beyond control.

But back again the ship must take its flight:
Yes, swiftly back to this real world of ours:
We leave behind the pictured theme so bright
To wend our worldly way of toilsome hours.
And who would not have sought those blissful bowers
Where thought made happiness the pleasing theme?
O, who would not tread fields of earthly flowers
In preference to the barren plain; 't would seem
'T were better than to weep and wail, then why not dream?

THE HERMIT'S EARLY MORNING REVERIE.

SO high among the mountains here,
With God and me alone,
The wintry days will soon appear
And death in tears bemoan.

Remembrance of the times gone by
Make plain the ones to come:
The often changed and frowning sky,
That speaks in language dumb;

The pelting rain, the shifting snow;
The chilling blasts so drear;
The leafless trees, the branch's flow,
Will tell that winter 's here.

Perhaps to-day the sky is clear,
With not a mar in view;
And you would think that not a tear
The heavens ever knew:

And yet the morrow brings a cloud,
  Which slowly larger swells;
And, shading all beneath its shroud,
  A coming storm foretells.

And e'er the light breaks in again,
  A drizzling rain sets in,
When, rousing from my slumber then,
  I listen from within.

The patter, patter overhead,
  The dripping from the eaves,
Makes cozier still my cozy bed,
  Which not a drop receives.

The din, the din upon the tin;
  The dripping, dripping down;
The gurgle, gurgle creeping in
  From gullies running down.

The trickle in the tins so placed
  To catch the water pure;
The splatter of the running waste
  My dreamy feelings lure.

I sleep and wake, then dream again,
And wait the coming day,
Till, mingling with the drowsy rain
My thoughts unconscious sway: —

Sway back to other rainy nights,
When life was mostly joy;
I listened to these keen delights, —
Such music to a boy.

Sway back to seek another dawn —
Another by my side —
Alas! dear brother, thou art gone,
And part of me has died.

Those dawns we woke to hear the rain,
Soft pattering on the roof!
Before the day had lit the pane,
Or pierced the night's black woof.

Those dawns, when underneath, we knew
That others slept, or woke
To hear the cock's first call anew,
Who to the morning spoke.

But round the darkness still hung low;
And softer fell the rain,—
Still softer — softer — into snow
That brushed the window pane.

Alas! Three graves upon the hill
Have gulped those others down;
And I alone await God's will
Without a smile or frown.

For one drear winter passed to March,
Then stopped, dead still, in pain,
And wailed in through its snow-wrapped arch
With sorrow, sleet, and rain.

And e'er time reached the next December,
Another mound was made.
Just two then met the dying ember,
And saw the ashes laid.

Still yet one other flowering May —
Just near the perfect June —
The one soul left me dropped away
Into the mystic swoon.

So, brother, father, mother gone,
I strayed on through the years,
Passed many a sad and wakeful dawn
With heart-felt silent tears.

Out in the rain! Out in the rain!
The leaves drip on their graves;
And yet their slant roofs drip no pain;
'T is only mine that craves.

But some kind murmur whispered low:
"Go, seek for love and joy
Out in the world — the passing show —
Your heart is sorrow's toy."

So, far I went and shook the hand
The world held out to me.
Ay, grasped it feebly — half unmanned
By all its mystery.

The world was kind, though, for a time,
And joy came; so did love,
For all, and one, and into rhyme
My soul was tuned above.

Sweet love returned is made of bliss
The wedding bells' sweet chiming,
Sends heaven's raptures into this
With all its spirit rhyming.

A year passed down, and she and I
Passed down that year together—
Passed on beneath a varied sky,
From fair to stormy weather.

Alas! The wind had swept a place:
And grave old winter sighed,
But sapped the life-blood from her face:
And spring said she had died.

Long years and lorn have passed away:—
A faith comes with the rain,
That somewhere on the soul's highway,
I 'll meet my loves again.

And meanwhile new joys have grown up:—
Ah, no, not quite so dear:
But just half fill life's empty cup
Through all the changing year.

I love the winter's rousing cold;
I love the spring and song;
I love the summer's shining gold,
And autumn's whirling throng.

For he who hears the season's song,
As past the numbers flit,
Can laugh and let the world go 'long,
Without a thought of it.

DO NOT TREMBLE.

DO not tremble, boy,
When thunders knock and forests shake;
The whole earth trembling seems to quake;
And demon fire shoots from the cloud.
Do not tremble: 't is allowed.

Do not tremble, youth:
Because the phantom fame floats on ahead:
When you give chase you find it fled:
Tumultuous floods on every side:
Do not tremble: stem the tide.

Do not tremble, man:
Lest, when your gold is coffered in the vault,
Some booted robber makes assault:
'T is gone; come taunts of poverty:
Do not tremble: you are free.

Do not tremble, age:
Because death angel wings beat down to thee
And drag you to that dreaded sea
Whose waves gulp clod that holds the soul:
Do not tremble:—let it roll.

THE STATUE OF FOLLY.

BY the brookside I stood, thinking
Of the vastness of our home,
With the brooklet's waters drinking
In each star of nature's dome,
When a fairy angel figure sat uprightly on the foam.

She was white as alabaster
In a vessel near the shore;
And my heart beat fast and faster
Than it ever had before,—
'T was a vision of such beauty that I could not help adore.

Not a ribbon looped her tresses:—
Just a wreathing of fresh flowers.
Robed in fair and sylphlike dresses,
Just from out some dreamland bowers;
And I gazing on the picture felt a failing of my powers,

Felt the soul die out with sighing,
As a faint star in the morning,
When the saddened night is dying,
And its darkened pall is torn.
So I knelt there on the sand-bar with imploring all forlorn.

Words of tenderness I uttered,—
Burning words from out my heart;
Pleading there I stooped and muttered
Words beyond an earthly art;
But she moved not, and she spoke not, and she gave no sign nor start.

Still I spoke on blindly, madly,
While the moonlight flooded o'er;
And the breezes sighed on sadly
By the brooklet's babbling shore;
But this Naiad stared out blankly, keeping silent as before.

Then a chill came, and I shuddered
Lest a dread fear might be real;
Like a lost ship all unruddered
All my senses seemed to reel;
And a cloud-shade falling round me seemed to spurn me with its heel.

Till in silent desperation,
Moved by some ungainly hand,
With a wild heart's palpitation
I stepped forward on the land;
Reached out blindly; found it marble; just a statue on the sand.

TO ——.

HOW little we know the heart of another:
Our own are hard to explain.
How little we know the smile of a brother
May not have been costing him pain.

Could we look o'er the field of the battle of hearts,
Which is walled to the questioning eye,
We would probably see what we never did see—
The birth of the deeds and the why.

We would probably see that the wrong that is done
Is done in the shadow of right;
And the cause of defeat is the lack of a force
In the mist and the gloom of the night.

We would probably see that the battles he won
Were many at dawn on the field;
But the enemy rose in the heat of the sun,
Outnumbered and forced him to yield.

So lend you a hand to the stumbling man,
And lift up your sword to the sky;
And help him to win in the battle of night;
For I heard from the heavens a cry:

How little we know the heart of another;
Our own are hard to explain.
How little we know the smile of a brother
May not have been costing him pain.

A SONNET.

SAD change: when joy comes thrilling all the land
With blessed thoughts of olden time release,
And life 's so full it seems 't will never cease,
And laughter almost holds you in her hand;
Never to lose, no more to leave the strand,
Where roams pure love, and where the doves of peace
Wing near their flight, and all fair hopes increase,
Shedding their light upon the golden sand —
To meet and face to face, old wrinkled Death,
With fiendish smile of triumph and uplifted wing,
Who fans your face with zephyrs of hot breath,
And, casting shades of awful suffering
Over the wharf where joy ships anchoreth,
Departs and leaves the soul an altered thing!

SEPTEMBER.

KIND September, do not go,
For we need your friendship so:
This is when the old friends meet —
Red-faced summer and autumn greet.
They have known each other years;
Often meet in silent tears;
Often shake each other's hand —
Do not speak, but understand.
Understand that many days
Must go by, e'er in the haze
Of this time they meet again —
Meet and greet as silent men.
So they often linger here
As two lovers by the mere —
Linger till October's chill
Drives the shepherd from the hill.
Linger here, and, hand in hand,
Do not speak, but understand.
O, we need your friendship so,
Kind September, do not go.

L. of C.

SMILES.

LET those who will the world encumber
With their small care and woe;
Be not yourself among the number,
But light the face with cheerful glow.

Turn on the world a painless smiling—
'T is smiles that cheer the heart;
And all the time sad souls beguiling
Bid pain and sorrowing depart.

But if at times the heart seems breaking,
You cannot bid it cease,
Turn not to man to soothe its aching,
Go, shrive yourself to bring release.

Go, hide and bask beneath the glowing
Of angel smiles above,
Till thrilling through with inward knowing
You smile a smile of peace and love.

A smile that with its cheerful token
  May soothe another's pain;
A smile that says when chains are broken
  You lived, you loved, and not in vain.

A smile that wins amidst the calling
  Of angels at the door,
In accents softly, sweetly falling,
  A welcome here for evermore.

MY GUERDON.

THOUGHTS, weird and silent chase, along,
Fancies shaped from out my life,
Sing, sing faintly, in one forgotten song;
Hope rises from its humble bed of strife,
Staring proudly on the morn.
Ah! hope and fate and strife and pain
Had been dying all forlorn,
Did not a lingering spark remain.
Thou hast been my guerdon, Love,
Walking heart in heart with me;
And with the twittering birds above
I join in praise of thee.

No, no, not praise: for what is praise?
Better have a loving heart to feel
A better life, when, in the autumn days,
All silently, we at some altar kneel.
Ah, praise so dank and dead and dark!
O love, so full of hope and light!

When eyes love eyes with every kindled spark,
And hands clasp hands in silent slumbering night,—
Woven into mine, woven into thine—
Stars rise, and the moon with happy tears
Full of ecstasy and Godly song,
With music, music dead to other ears
Floods are souls and twangs each tended thong.

Now breaks the morn with ripening corn;
To pluck the golden ears is ready ease;
A wondrous harvest would the world adorn,
If but the hand of love did all appease.
Life, O life! come ring your sounding bell
That echoes from this earth to heaven's door
Will break the silence, stir the gates of hell,—
The visionary gates, that beauty hates—
Aye, banish them, and love what God creates.
But even I must help to ring the bell—
The bell, where apathy still hangs with heavy weight,
Ring, ring loudly from every sounding cell.

I hear the battling chain of earth
  Clanking, clanking on the rocks:
Blood kindles in the veins of worth
  To ope the gate that wisdom locks.
But now the trailing sun is low, —
  I hear the whisk of tired wings,
And close beside I feel a glow
  And a gentle voice that sings:
"Art thou yet my own, my love?"
  And the world fades with all it brings.

And there in the soothing dusk of eve,
  Clasped closely in embrace,
We watch the world, and trustingly believe —
  The moon and stars each in its place —
Forgotten all the hollow voice
  That speaks for worldly weal.
Love, love deeply for only one of choice; —
  As when your passioned whispers steal
Unto my soul — as lovers stroll,
  Or as cooling water unto thirsty throats,
Or as gentle music floats
  Upon the evening air,
Filling up the deepened cells of care.

Age, gray hairs, and wrinkles on my brow:
  The world cares naught for me.
With trust I turn, with trust renew my vow,
  With what sweet trust I turn to thee,
As welling up through all the loving years.
  With hair that mingles gray with gray,
We clasp each other then, and loving lose our tears,
  And turn our happy thoughts along the way.
Hope, joy, faith, and sure regard,
  Love deepens into a stream,
Flowing calmly through the teeming sward,
  We float out on a dream.

THE WAY OF LIFE.

WE sometimes feel
As we journey along,
Like breaking away
From the right to the wrong.
The road is so steep
And the sun is so hot,
That we sometimes think:
Is it better or not,
To toil on ahead
To that green everglade,
Or drop down and rest
Forever in shade?

We sometimes feel
That 't is better to gain
The pleasures of life,
Whatever the pain;
To gather the flowers
Of indolent ease,

Though the sun on the morrow
Bring shameful release:
Than to bear up against
This mountain of toil,
And shoulder our share
Of the earth's turmoil.

'T is the weakness of life—
The childish complaint
To be free of the strife
And the bitter constraint;
But we never can get
Or we never can gain,
But the world is the better
For our toiling and pain.
Let us live for the world,
Not heaven's reward;
If to dust we return,
Let it be the greensward.

A VOICE RETURNED.

I TURNED from my heart in the darkness
And uttered my soul out alone;
For hope lay staring in starkness;
Seemed cold and dead as a stone.
How heavy the doubts that encumber
With deep-rooted fear and with pain!
Yet flock o'er the soul without number
And darken this surge of its main.
So I spoke in despair, and then listened
While the world in its silence stole on;
For I thought, from the darkness unglistened
Came a sound from a voice that is gone.

Was it the rustle of leaves that fluttered?
Or the sigh of the wind in the trees?
'T was surely a syllable uttered,
Though wafted away by the breeze.
I could not have heard and mistaken
A voice I have known as a child

(Ah, how well I have known): So, unshaken,
I listened and peered, unbeguiled;
A hush, and the silence was broken,
And afar, with the peep of the dawn,
So full of encouragement spoken,
Came the words from the voice that is gone:

"Be brave in your nebulous dwelling,
And smile on the world and its care;
For sorrow is borrowed in selling
Thy soul to the demon despair;
And happiness, hope, and devotion,
Will rise from their adamant form,
If you throw from your fancy the notion
That your ship is alone in the storm.
Be brave in mortality's session;
Your motto be forward and on;
For this is the hope in confession,"
Were the words from the voice that is gone.

THE SAND-LILY.

WHERE the plain is the barest,
A flower the fairest
Has lifted its head.
Where the dunes have been drifted
By the sand that is sifted —
All others are dead.

There the serpents are gliding
Like demons in hiding,
But never infest;
For the grace of the flower
In sultriest hour
Is sacred and blest.

Alone in its beauty,
As if conscious of duty,
It droops a fair face;
And yet, reconciling
All around with its smiling
Of infinite grace.

In the midst of the glimmer
Of heat, and the simmer
  Of desert and death,
Its purity blesses
The air it caresses
  With every sweet breath.

Like the soul that is purest
Of all that endurest,
  The sand-lily blows;
Like the soul that is whitest
Where the touch of sin blightest,
  In the desert it grows.

TWO HANDS.

WITH weary tread came one from out the fields:
Rough hands he had, all seamed with marks of toil.
A thrifty stranger drew away in scorn
To grasp that roughened palm; yet well it was,
For drops of life blood cling within those mouths.
All bowed was he — the owner of this hand —
Still lower bowed to see the soft white one
Whose tapered fingers bore bright rings of gold
Well set with precious stones. Hard years of life
Upon another's finger stared at him;
Long groaning nights that follow days of strain
Had paid in soul a fiend's own price for these.

And lower still in humbleness he bowed
When he, the two, with startled glance compared:
His own he sees, a lifeless-looking chip —
Sun-cracked and dead; the other smooth and fair.
Ah, where 's the tongue can tell the bitter pangs
Of lost hopes in that weary broken look?

Whose brush can picture all his stifled woe?
Whose pen divine can tell it o'er again?
He spoke no word, but seemed to gaze in pain,
Or awful dread, across the desert past;
Or down the darkening future, all alone,
And side by side two hands contrasted there:
Two hands then, when both were young and fair;
Two hands now, when both are turned apart;
Two hands soon, when both enfolded lie.

There was no need to look again: deep-sered
In recollection, two shapes burned apart
Upon the dead, dank wall of memory.
His sharp woe buried in his bosom bare;
His life track black and misty on ahead;
He stood in moody reverie.
And envy born from this ill-mated pair
Looked in upon his soul, and then looked out
Through eyes aglow with one hot flash of flame.
— As powder thrown upon an ash-blown coal —
Flashed sudden anger; then a flood of tears
Rushed hurrying out, but quickly dammed within,
It never reached the lash. His bosom heaved,
And with one sigh he went back to his field.

O hand of sloth, beware! that smoldering fire
So long beneath the shifting ash of time
May flash again and sere your perfect mold.
Some lofty one has said, "His brain is dead"
—This owner of the hand so seamed and rough—
But, e'er the embers' toil are wholly dead,
Some mightier, horny-handed spirit king,
God-sent, and stalking earthward with his load,
May heap a pile of fuel upon this fire,
That will uproar and burn a wondrous change.

DO BE JOLLY.

BE jolly and be gay;
That surely is the way
To drive away our sorrow and our care.
Though you bear a heavy load
O'er life's uneven road,
Let every one believe that you no burden bear.

Be jolly and be gay;
Be cheerful now, to-day,
Although to-morrow sees you die in pain.
To every one you meet
A cheerful word repeat;
Let not your tear-drops give another's heart a stain.

For what 's the use at all,
Of doubling all the gall
That penetrates the bosom while we stay.
Then you 'd better shed a smile
Upon others all the while,
So that when you 're with them, they 'll be jolly and be gay.

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